



Patient Liaisons...Help when you need it

When military health care facilities are not able to provide you with the care you need, our hospitals, TRICARE offices, and clinics will arrange for your health care in host nation hospitals and clinics.

Since many of us do not speak the local language and may not be familiar with the European health care systems, Patient Liaisons can help smooth the way. They are well acquainted with hospital staff and know the local medical system procedures.

What do I do if I am in the hospital and don't speak the local language?

Most medical professionals speak some English. Patient Liaisons employed by the military health care facilities can help you communicate with your doctors and the staff in Host Nation hospitals and clinics.



Where do I get follow-up care after being hospitalized in a Host Nation facility?

Patient Liaisons coordinate a follow-up care plan for you upon your discharge from a Host Nation hospital. If you were seen as an outpatient in a German facility, you will normally get follow-up care in the U.S. military clinic with the doctor who gave you the referral. It is important to keep copies of all your paperwork (test results, etc.). Bring these documents to your follow-up appointment for review by your doctor. If the documents are in another language, they will be translated.

Your Host Nation doctor may recommend that you follow-up with him/her. Remember that, unless these follow-up visits have been authorized by TRICARE, you may be required to pay for any follow-up appointments.

How can Patient Liaisons help?

Patient Liaisons are fluent in English and the Host Nation language. They are familiar with medical terminology and can assist you with communication. This ensures that you and the hospital staff have a complete understanding of your condition and treatment.

When you visit your TRICARE Service Center to arrange your admission to a hospital, TSC personnel notify your local Patient Liaison. The main priority of the Patient Liaison program is to make visits to patients in Host Nation hospitals.

You may also contact a Patient Liaison any time you need assistance. If you are in a Host Nation hospital, the Patient Liaison will visit you every duty day and give you information on how to contact him or her. There is a Patient Liaison on call in your community for emergencies after hours and on weekends.

If you (Soldier or Family Member) are admitted to a Host Nation hospital for an emergency, please notify your unit as soon as possible. Your unit will notify the nearest local clinic or hospital and a Patient Liaison will contact you. Clinic Commanders receive daily reports of all U.S. military patients admitted to or discharged from Host Nation facilities.

What can the Patient Liaison do for me?

- Help you obtain up-to-date information on your medical condition and care plan.
- Arrange to be present when your doctor makes bedside visits.
- Give you information and handouts about local hospitals, policies, and procedures.
- Tell you what to expect in Host Nation facilities, explain common cultural differences, and advise you what to bring to the hospital.
- Help plan your transfer from a military medical facility to a Host Nation medical facility or from a Host Nation facility to a military medical facility.
- Provide maps to Host Nation facilities.
- Provide you with a copy of the USAREUR Medical Phrase book.
- Help coordinate consults, tests, and follow-up care.
- Provide local resources for medical supplies and pharmacies.

Please note: Patient Liaisons *cannot* transport patients in their private cars.

What can I do to help myself?

- Write down questions you have about your condition, care, or discharge.
- Visit your local TRICARE Office for information about payment of hospital bill

Some Cultural Differences You May Experience



During rounds, junior physicians often accompany attending physicians. This can make it difficult for patients to feel comfortable asking questions. Write down your questions. During rounds, it is appropriate to ask if your doctor has time to address your questions. If not, ask when your doctor can return.

Traditionally, breakfast is a light continental meal, lunch is a cooked meal, and dinner is bread and cold cuts. If you are not on a specific diet, you can ask friends or family to bring you something to warm in the ward microwave.

You may not use cell phones in Host Nation hospitals. Take enough Euros to purchase a hospital telephone card that will allow you to make and receive calls from your bed side phone.

Host Nation hospitals do not provide personal items and toiletries. If you forget your personal items, the hospitals generally have small shops where you can purchase the basics until family or friends can provide you with what you need.

Generally, there are no privacy screens between beds. Do not wear transparent clothing. Take appropriate clothing that allows you to remain semi-dressed during an upper body exam.

Televisions have only Host Nation channels. You may bring a small DVD player or radio with head phones (respect the comfort of those around you). Do not forget that book you have always wanted to read. Ask friends and family to bring current magazines or puzzle books that can help pass the time while waiting for tests.

If you do not speak the Host Nation language, bring a bilingual dictionary. Although your Liaison will provide you with a medical terminology translation booklet, your stay in the hospital can be an excellent opportunity to learn a few words of the Host Nation language.

Parking may not be available for long term stays. If parked illegally, some hospitals will have your car towed away at a cost of about 120 Euros. Have someone take you and pick you up from the hospital. Depending on the reason for your admission, it may not be safe to drive yourself.

To comment on the care you received in a host nation facility or the support you received from a Patient Liaison, visit this website: <http://www.europe.tricare.osd.mil/main/commentcard/commentcard.asp>

Clinic _____ TRICARE Office _____

Patient Liaison _____ Emergency _____

Appointments _____ Pediatrician _____

Europe Regional Medical Command
Public Affairs Office